



Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee

Minutes

Date: Sept 16th, 2020

Time: 7:15PM

Location: Via Zoom conference

Attendees: *Executive committee*: Christopher Tonkin (chair), Doug Greenfield, Jack Johnson, Muris Kobaslija, Adam MacNeill, Doug Mayo-Wells, Scott Smith

Town of Arlington: Daniel Amstutz

Members of the public: David Creedon, Linda Epstein, Phil Goff, Roderick Holland, Susan Ann Kehler, Galen Mook, Alison Piasecki, Judith Proctor, Ted Proctor, Thomas Proctor, Brian Ristuccia

1. Introductions, Ground rules

Meeting opens with review of emergency remote public meeting guidance consistent with Governor Baker's executive order of March 12th, 2020: The Governor's order suspends the requirement of Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a public and accessible location. Public meetings may meet entirely remotely as long as the public can access the meeting.

Committee secretary Doug Mayo-Wells is taking minutes; the meeting is being recorded for the purposes of verifying the minutes; and the recording will be deleted after the minutes are approved.

Executive committee roll call:

Christopher Tonkin, chair, present

Jack Johnson, present

Muris Kobaslija, present

Adam MacNeill, present

Doug Mayo-Wells, present

Scott Smith, present

Doug Greenfield, present

(Note: Adam MacNeill joined subsequent to roll call)

From the Town of Arlington:

Daniel Amstutz, Sr Transportation Planner, present

Participants are invited to introduce themselves and affiliation, if any:

Alison Piasecki, Charlie Proctor's partner

Brian Ristuccia, Arlington resident, bike commuter

David Creedon, member at large

Galen Mook, executive director, MassBike

Linda Epstein, Arlington heights resident, cycling advocate

Phil Goff; East Arlington Livable Streets co-chair

Thomas Proctor, Charlie Proctor's brother

Judith Proctor & Ted Proctor, Charlie Proctor's parents

(The following joined subsequent to introduction)

Susan Ann Kehler

Roderick Holland

Stephan Miller

2. Approval of the minutes from July and August

Tonkin: Have committee members had an opportunity to review July and August minutes?

Mayo-Wells: Also, January and February

Smith: Comments in document re: self-organized shared street on Amherst St (clarify that street was not closed).

Mayo-Wells: Notes typo of "the" for "their" which was corrected after draft was submitted

Smith proposes a motion to accept minutes as amended.

Amstuz: Just July and August, or also January and February?

Mayo-Wells: Clarifies that committee reviewed draft of January minutes, but not February

Kobaslija: Read the August minutes, but was not present for the August meeting, vote separately?

Smith moves to accept July minutes as amended

Mayo-Wells seconds the motion, Tonkin takes a roll call vote:

Tonkin: Yes

Kobaslija: Yes

Greenfield: Yes

Smith: Yes

Mayo-Wells: Yes

Johnson: abstains (absent for July)

SO VOTED (5-0)

Smith moves to accept August minutes as amended

Mayo-Wells seconds the motion, Tonkin takes a roll call vote:

Johnson: Yes

Smith: Yes, but requests spelling correction for Officer Rateu

Mayo-Wells: Yes

Greenfield: Yes

Tonkin: Yes

Kobaslija: abstains (absent for August)

SO VOTED (5-0)

Amstutz: Appreciates help locating old minutes. December minutes taken by David Creedon have also not been accepted/posted.

Creedon: Have located the copy with comments.

Amstutz: Verifies there are no other extant comments.

3. COBWEB OFFICER

Tonkin: Contacted Police Captain Curran, but not in time to schedule an officer to attend tonight, however Capt. Curran provided an alternate point of contact and will arrange for regular forwarding of crash data to ABAC.

4. TAC report

(Transportation Advisory Committee)

Smith:

- Met last week. Moving faster on Chestnut Street crosswalks where we had a fatality last year (section of Rt 60 where it splits from Rt 3, by the municipal lot).
- 2 new members appointed to TAC: Thouis Ray Jones, Shoji Takahashi
- No official request for member for Mass Ave/Appleton Design Review Committee, but Jeff Maxtutis has been appointed
- Discussed cycle track vs bike lane in front of High School

Tonkin: Notes that committee member Adam MacNeill has joined the meeting

Greenfield: Move ahead to Ghost Bike agenda item, in case Charlie Proctor's family does not want to attend all of the proceedings?

Tonkin: Yes. Should we invite Len Diggins to an upcoming ABAC meeting?

Smith affirms Diggins' interest in transportation matters.

5. Ghost Bike update.

Judith Proctor:

- Sent a request to Town Manager (TM) Adam Chapdelaine, copied Christopher Tonkin, TAC, etc. to try to secure a date for installation of the Ghost Bike memorial for Charlie Proctor.
- Had a good meeting with TM 3/4 weeks ago; had a suggestion for placement, and needed to confer with DPW as to how it could be executed, as well as making sure that the Town can could install a memorial on the proposed property (near the bus stop) and also to confirm with Veterans' Services re: the memorial to Captain Joseph Grant.
- Chose Friday dates in October and November, should be good days for people in Arlington Government, as well as friends of Charlie's and others to come to the ceremony, which will be led by Reverend Laura Everett
- Waiting for updates, happy to entertain suggestions on how to expedite

Amstutz: Is the question about location, date? How can I help?

Judith Proctor: Finalize date, but also to make sure land was owned by the Town (not the Children's Room), and that Veterans' Services has been contacted.

Thomas Proctor: Clarifies that three emails have been sent to TM since August 25.

Mayo-Wells: Shares personal opinion that direct personal appeal to Veterans' Services director Jeff Chunglo might help communicate the gravity of the situation.

6. Update on the Design Review Committee for Mass Ave/Appleton.

Tonkin: Nothing new to report other than Jeff Maxtutis appointment

Epstein: Haven't heard anything new yet

Goff: Haven't heard either, expecting to be one of 3 citizen representatives but have not received formal notification

7. Lake Street lane markings, room for a bike lane?

Tonkin: Lake Street will be re-striped, Amstutz advised that it might be a good candidate for adding a bike lane, given its width, lack of on-street parking. Not a favorable initial response from DPW

Smith:

- Town has had a design matrix for 4 years (with input from Goff, others); at TAC meeting Town Engineer (TE) Wayne Chouinard said this matrix would be applied to Lake St.
- Design matrix calls for 10 - 11" travel lanes, depending on speeds and truck traffic, which provides width for a bike lane on Lake St (at least on the western section).
- However, TE indicated that the matrix is being interpreted to measure lane width from the edge of the marking rather than center, which creates a 6" to 12" difference in measured lane width. Smith notes that this is not general measurement practice per Federal highway guidance or per previous DPW practice
- Based on speed studies and light truck traffic, Lake Street is in range to have a narrower (10.5') travel lane width, providing ample clearance for a bike lane. Smith notes that Mass Ave in North Cambridge has 10' travel lanes. DPW assessed that Lake Street has moderate vs. light truck traffic (although Lake St. has a truck ban) and higher speeds, requiring a wider travel lane.
- Smith e-mailed Amstutz and Tonkin to advise the plan (to not add bike lanes) is not in accordance with matrix or Complete Streets policy
- Goff advocated compromise of 10.5' travel lane, measured from center of markings, which provides width for a bike lane among most of the length
- Have not received response on 10.5' lane compromise proposal

Tonkin: Should the speed limit of 30mph on Lake St be lowered to match the Town 25mph standard, which we would alleviate the speed concerns?

Smith: History, Lake St last redone 10-15 years ago, with 11' travel lanes, and ride-able shoulder, but not wide enough for a bike lane. Asking for ~6" travel lane reduction to provide enough room for a bike lane; TE would prefer to keep lane markings unchanged.

Goff: 10'6" "clear" (of marking width) would actually widen the current travel lane by 2", since the previous 11' lanes were measured from the center of the markings. With the 11'2" lane width (8" wider than guidance), the shoulder would be too narrow at some points (east of the bike trail, where overall width decreases to 28') to be a ride-able shoulder (below the minimum 48"" although 60" is preferred).

Goff: Notes these numbers aren't standards, but are intended to guide improvements in bike facilities on roadways that are part of the designated bike network

Mayo-Wells: Are appearing/disappearing bike lanes part of the concern (as on Mass Ave in North Cambridge)?

Smith: Did not hear that concern expressed by DPW (but aware of Mass Ave concerns). Lake St is wider between Rt 2 and Margaret Street, narrower to the east, so width does not switch back and forth between wide enough/not wide enough.

Tonkin: Would also link up with (and improve visibility of) bikeway on west side of Spy Pond

Amstutz: Yes, Lake St Section 2, between approximately Margaret St/Minuteman Bikeway and Colonial Dr (extent of repainting) is 30'-34' wide, so there is room for a bike lane.

Amstutz: Also, MassDOT recently repaved Lake St between Colonial Dr and the west/south side of Rt 2, adding sharrows, and a bike lane on the ramp leading to Rt 2 and Acorn Park Dr, so there are connections there – is wider, has no bus traffic and has a truck exclusion, so is promising from bike network perspective.

Smith: Previous disagreement with DPW (over pedestrian auto recall behavior) was escalated to the Town Manager.

Johnson: Recommends escalation to TM in this instance. DPW often inclined not to make changes e.g., to previous lane markings, but the Town now has the Complete Streets policy, needs to abide by that. ABAC's role is to advise the town on issues related to bicycling; ABAC should inform the Select Board (copying TM) that the policy needs to be upheld and ask the Select Board to advise DPW.

Goff: Would TAC cosign such a letter? Or would that introduce delay?

Smith: Let's keep it simple, get a letter to the Select Board, Town Manager, and DPW director Mike Radmacher this week (before stripes go down).

Goff: Will a letter from ABAC raise a question for the Select Board of "What is TAC's position" and potentially introduce delay?

Smith: Has only come up in the last week (at TAC meeting).

Amstutz: Came to my attention 2 weeks ago, notified by APD in conjunction with Mary St shared streets project. A limitation of the design matrix is that it doesn't provide prescriptive guidance on what to do next. It's a guide but doesn't indicate what decisions call for public engagement, TAC, ABAC involvement, etc.

Smith: TE Chouinard did reach out to TAC on Lowell Street. But have a substantive disagreement here.

Kobaslija: Do we know the planned date for painting, because paving seems complete as of today?

Amstutz: Have not heard anything more specific than "end of month"

Tonkin: Let's escalate. Letter to Town Manager, and Select Board?

Smith: 2 points to make

1. DPW not following Complete Streets policy, potentially jeopardizes funding
2. Request that striping follow guidance, appendix of tech details. Will draft tomorrow.

Amstutz: recommendation: specify "please put bike lane on this section" vs. apply the matrix correctly.

Mayo-Wells: Emphasize potential consequences of not following guidance? (e.g., funding)

Goff: Is this MassDOT funded?

Smith: No.

Amstutz: Suggests caution about assertions of funding impact

Kobaslija: Add importance of connection to bike path, Belmont. But, keep short and simple.

MacNeill: Historically TM has been good at getting back to people, but with special Town Meeting planning, things are very busy. Phone follow-up to TM might be worthwhile.

Creedon: Letter should lead with the strongest point: Not following our own policy.

Tonkin: Moves that Smith drafts letter, Smith and Tonkin jointly send to TM, Select Board, Mike Rademacher, and TAC.

Kobaslija seconds the motion, Tonkin takes a roll call vote:

Kobalija: Yes

Smith: Yes

Greenfield: Yes

Johnson: Yes

MacNeill: Yes

Tonkin: Yes

Mayo-Wells: Yes

SO VOTED (7-0)

8. Lake Street/Bikeway signal project construction status and discussion.

Amstutz: Nothing new to report. Began putting up new signals at the bikeway and fixing/replacing signals at Brooks St approximately 2 weeks ago; seems to be more-or-less on track. (Original plan was to finish before school opens.)

Johnson: The traffic lights have been installed. Haven't been informed of any communication plan from the Town re: enforcement, change in traffic pattern, etc. The pattern of cyclists often not stopping for the stop sign/cars stopping for bikes has been ingrained over decades and will be hard to change (on both sides). May need to have officers on site directing traffic. Technical question, will the signal come on automatically for bikeway users, or do they need to press a button for the green light?

Amstutz: Should have video detection.

Holland: Swan PI was supposed to have video detection, but often didn't trigger. Could wait for several minutes, which incentivized riders to ignore the signal.

Smith: Clarifies that Lake St crossing uses video detection, with a backup push button for pedestrians. There is a concern that many video detection signals are not being well maintained; when the detection fails, they default to an often-inefficient fixed-time operation. Likely to have problems with this signal, given the track record: video detection at Swan PI, Bates Rd, and Linwood St have all had or are currently experiencing issues.

Mayo-Wells: When a new stop sign was installed on Rindge Ave in Cambridge last year, there was a lighted sign to advise motorists of the traffic pattern change. Do we have something like that available in Town?

Tonkin: Arlington does have large amber blinking signs, not sure who can install. Captain Curran may be able to advise.

Amstutz: DPW manages the project. Communication aspect has sometimes been a challenge, e.g., notices about the sidewalk project in Arlington Center. Although DPW is managing the project, Town website updates are made by the planning department. Will follow up.

Johnson: Communication should emphasize education over enforcement, don't want to ticket everyone on their first offense, but may need active officer involvement to direct traffic initially.

Smith: Also, educate motorists not to block the crosswalk

Greenfield: Moves that Tonkin draft a letter to Capt. Curran as discussed
MacNeill seconds the motion, Tonkin takes a roll-call vote:

Tonkin: Yes

Smith: Yes

Greenfield: Yes

Mayo-Wells: Yes

MacNeill: Yes

Kobaslija: Yes

Johnson: Yes

SO VOTED (7-0)

Tonkin: Will draft, share draft for comment with Johnson

Kobaslija: Will there be signage on the bikeway approaching the light? Especially when leaves are on the trees, you approach the intersection before seeing the light.

Tonkin: Should invest in signs on either side

Johnson: Thinks the design plan called for signage?

Amstutz: Has a copy of the 100% plan from Fall 2018 and can provide.

9. The new shared lane markings by Town Hall.

Tonkin: Email was drafted by Smith, with photos, and sent today (Sep 16). Expect to be able to provide an update next month.

10. Bluebikes latest.

Tonkin: Thanks to Holland for pictures of in-progress installation

Amstutz:

- 4 should be installed and operational now: Railroad lot at Bikeway, Linwood at Bikeway, Grafton St at Mass Ave, and Grafton St at Broadway (Grafton street docks should have been installed yesterday, Sep 15).
- Final 2 were approved by the Select Board on August 31st, with a further revision approved Monday Sep 14.
 - Mass Ave/Broadway installation is delayed because space is used by contractor for Arlington Center sidewalk project, although that work should complete by end of month.
 - At Magnolia field and Bikeway, the previous proposed location was reviewed with DPW Director Rademacher, because sidewalk construction is required(to provide a surface for the dock to sit on). Determined that for winter operation the location was too far from the bikeway (too far to shovel out well, approx 30'). Will build the pad close to the bikeway, (near where the bikeway turns past the south end of the Thorndike parking lot) by the sidewalk around Magnolia field. May install pad this week.

Goff: Bike share is year round, or seasonal?

Amstutz:

- Program itself is year-round. Would like some Arlington docks to operate year round, but likely not the on-street docks. Magnolia field station will be year round (Bluebikes has a contractor for snow removal).
- Bluebikes has 3 options:

- Dock operates throughout winter in normal position
- Dock is placed in winter storage
- On-street dock is moved to off-street location (not currently feasible for Arlington)

Goff: What about a year-round station at Broadway plaza (in front of Starbucks)?

Amstutz: Could potentially work for this season. However, Water Authority pipe at Broadway plaza needs to be excavated next year, Plaza reconstruction delayed for that. Currently set up poorly, so not a good permanent location yet.

Johnson: Could Railroad Ave dock remain on-street year-round, since it's basically a parking lot?

Amstutz: No, dock occupies snow storage location.

Johnson: Possible to move the dock to the opposite end?

Amstutz: Maybe; will investigate.

Greenfield: Not clear on Mass Ave at Broadway, what is the exact location?

Amstutz: 2 parking spaces on the Fire station side of Mass Ave close to war memorial; so technically on Mass Ave, but at Broadway

Kobaslija: Does station removal for winter have an impact from the perspective of desired minimum distance between stations?

Amstutz: Bluebikes needs to store the stations, so they will have an opportunity to make a determination. Overall Bluebikes ridership drops by 50%. Station pickups start in October, run through November.

11. Arlington Shared Streets Pilot, Anything New.

Amstutz:

- Brooks Ave: Select Board approved only until beginning of school, i.e., Sep 21. Hasn't been an opportunity to revisit that date, so materials will be removed on Sep 18, but could be re-installed contingent on Select Board approval.
- Mary St: Applied for Shared Streets & Spaces funding, received grants to purchase materials for use on both Brooks Ave (reinstallation) and Mary St (as a pilot). Need to implement in next few weeks

Kobaslija: Communication from Town today implied different dates, shared streets to run through fall?

Amstutz: This was an issue with how the Select Board approved the program, because of concerns about potential effect on school traffic. Need to go back to the Select Board to get extension approved.

12. Connect Arlington, the Town's Sustainable Transportation Plan.

Amstutz:

- Moving ahead. Had intended to release the factbook a month ago but edits have taken longer than expected (issues with crash data/safety section). Just sent small, final edits and next week hope to release both the factbook and a summary of public involvement over the last 8 months
- The strategic component starts in earnest toward the end of the month; there will be more public engagement in October.

13. Bike Friendly Community: reapplication, what is needed?

Tonkin: Received email indicating that we can request a delay in application.

Amstutz: Talking with the planning director to decide whether to get the application submitted by Oct, or ask to delay until Feb 10 (spring). It has been challenging since they keep changing things.

14. Free-range kids on bikes, on and off the Minuteman.

Holland: Nothing new to report, haven't reached out to the Human Rights Commission yet. But continuing to observe a lot of young people on bikes, popping wheelies etc.

15. Update on the automated Bikeway counter.

Tonkin: Goff sent updates on EALS counts.

Amstutz: Had to replace parts 2 or 3 times, but has been operational since the start of September. Follow up is to work with manufacturers, MassDOT to eliminate bad pedestrian data. Bike data showed no anomalies. But bad data in the reporting system makes analysis very difficult, e.g. showing 50 thousand pedestrians/day using the bikeway in March.

Goff: EALS did peak morning (7-9am) and afternoon (4:30-6:30) counts yesterday (Sep 15)

- Mass & Teel (only counting cyclists)
- Minuteman Bikeway at Thorndike Dog Park (counting cyclists & pedestrians)
- 7-9am volume about 1/3 of typical
- 4:30-6:30 volume 55%-60% of typical
- Not sure of pedestrian/cyclist split at the dog park.

Amstutz: Since cycle data from automatic counter seems accurate, I can report that the daily average for weekdays is down about 50% vs. last year. Weekends are down about 35%. Similar to EALS data. Although other communities are reporting booms in bike traffic, we are perhaps observing loss of commuter traffic?

16. Tour of Arlington an October event or Spring?

Tonkin: Will the weather be bad in October? Will it still need to be virtual in spring?

Smith: I like October.

Kobaslija: Concept is still to hang out and wait for visitors, provide commentary?

Tonkin: Yes. May have freebies from MassBike. Can include hills for a change, since it's not an organized ride.

Johnson: Virtual tour sounds great, but 6-8 week lead time is the "golden rule" for publicity which would mean spring, maybe May. Need to actually plan over the winter.

Mayo-Wells: Can also see how state reopening goes, maybe could be less virtual in the spring? Could evaluate in January timeframe.

Mook: Coordinating with Bike Week sounds good, happy to help. Doing a "keeping the torch lit" month now. Will have pins, some lights to hand out.

17. Any other business.

Tonkin: Brian Ristuccia had raised question about pedestrian light switches in town.

Smith: All walk signals were made automatic early in pandemic response (more concern about surfaces then, than now). Switch behavior was reversed without public input. At least one button doesn't work (Arlington Center, Medford Street by Leader Bank). Have been corresponding with DPW on this issue.

Goff: EALS Coalition wrote a letter to DPW Director Rademacher on this topic, and was informed that this decision was made by the Town Manager; no response yet from TM.

Tonkin: Let's put on the agenda for next month and follow up. Any other business?

Kehler: Appreciate opportunity to participate, look forward to participating in future.

Smith: Reads draft of letter as discussed above requesting bike lanes be added south of Margaret St. and citing justifications.

MacNeill: There is a special Town Meeting scheduled in November, and the warrant article for expanded operational hours for the Minuteman bikeway will be on the docket. It probably won't be included on the consent agenda, but hopeful that it will pass.

Amstutz:

- Suggests adding "not a bus route" to the draft of the letter, MBTA prefers 11' travel lanes for buses, but that is not an issue on Lake St between Margaret St and Rt 2.

- The Special Town Meeting is on Nov 16. We had a Community Preservation Act (CPA) application for funding a study on bikeway, which was withheld from the June Town Meeting.
- Planning to put it back on the November Town Meeting agenda: Requesting 20K\$ for bikeway safety study to look at lighting, potentially widening intersections at Water St, Linwood St., etc.

Holland: Will be taking part in Town Meeting, happy to help as appropriate. Also observes that Grafton Bluebikes dock is already getting substantial use.

Smith moves to adjourn

Tonkin seconds and takes roll call vote

Tonkin: Yes

Smith: Yes

MacNeill: Yes

Johnson: Yes

Mayo-Wells: Yes

Greenfield: Yes

Kobaslija: Yes

Adjourned